

The Bandit Cell

By: IndigoRho

On a small hill a charr lay flat, eye to a spyglass. August Spiritstorm's light blue and white vest didn't provide the best camouflage—especially on grass and dirt—though his dark gray fur and black mane weren't any better. All he could do was stay low and hope suspicious eyes didn't wander his way. Below as a bandit camp belonging to a group that had been harassing local patrols for weeks. They weren't many—four humans at most—but they'd still managed to be an irritation. That would soon end now that August had located their hideout.

At the moment there was little August could do on his own. He was skilled, but taking on four bandits would be reckless. He *did* have a plan to lower their numbers—and get a meal in the process. August was a mesmer, and aside from being able to create illusions he could also make portals. While stealthily investigating the camp up close earlier he'd marked a spot in front of a large tent as a potential portal opening. When an unlucky bandit wandered over it he'd create the exit—in his stomach. The camp would instantly have one less bandit, and August would gain a bouncing belly and a filling lunch.

Though fairly fit, August enjoyed live meals. The sensation of his gut swelling with prey was well worth the excess weight he'd have to work off after. His preference was other charr—they were simply larger—but barkeeps tended to frown on him gorging on their customers. Humans weren't as filling, but at least he got less flack from snacking on them. It was a shame the bandits were on the lean side.

Suddenly there was movement from the tent. A bandit strolled out, shouting something behind him and protectively gripping a sheathed dagger in one hand. August had overheard the group gambling on a card game when he was investigating, and assumed the bandit hadn't had much luck. It certainly wasn't about to improve, either.

With a thought August finally made the portal exit, shivering as a surge of magic flowed within him. Directly below the bandit's feet a shimmering disk of purple appeared. His arms flailed and a look of shock came upon his face as the ground abruptly gave in beneath him, his dagger flying.

At the same time, August's middle started to bulge out. The snap buttons of his vest popped open in a flurry as he rose on his knees. His furry black belly was soon exposed, swelling more and more by the second as the bandit fell right into it. The feasting charr moaned and grinned as he went from hungry to sated in a flash.

August gripped his bulging gut with both paws and gave it a teasing squeeze. “Hope you're enjoying your temporary cell, bandit. I'd say there are worse fates than ending up on a charr's waistline.”

Now painfully aware of where he was, the bandit frantically began to struggle, blindly kicking and punching the walls of his fleshy prison. August was used to rowdy meals, merely burping in response. It'd been quite a while since anyone had managed to escape his belly, and the lucky person in question had been a rather bulky charr fortunately too drunk to remember what happened. August doubted the much smaller bandit would pull off such a feat.

Meanwhile, back in the camp, the swallowed bandit's disappearance hadn't gone unnoticed. The lone guard on duty nearby had heard his compatriot's dagger clatter to the ground. He cautiously headed towards the tent, his gaze darting everywhere *but* the ground. By pure chance he stepped upon the still active portal, letting out a startled yelp as he stumbled through.

August lurched as he felt something new pushing into his stomach, his eyes widening in confusion. The charr's belly swelled further, the added weight pulling him to the ground with enough force to provoke a loud belch. He blushed as he was stuffed even more, his massive gut a shifting mass. Only then did he realize he'd neglected to dissipate the portal.

Unfortunately the fall of the second bandit was much louder than the first. The other two within

the tent rushed out to investigate—and right into the portal.

Up on the hill the charr mesmer was powerless to stop his unwanted third and fourth courses. His belly spread out in all directions, August rising atop it as the number of occupants doubled. His hide tingled as it rapidly stretched to handle the bandits.

The grin that'd been on August's face was gone, replaced by a dazed, almost woozy look. He groaned, eyes rolling, fuller than he'd been in a long, *long* while. The bandits crammed into his stomach were cursing and squirming, pressing out on all sides. Despite their numbers they didn't have enough room to properly fight back, and at times hit each other more than the charr who'd engorged on them.

Slowly but surely August regained his senses, adjusting to the situation and being so full. He looked down on his bulging belly, paws unable to reach the ground, and his smile gradually returned. A whole bandit camp was stewing in his gut. August rubbed and groped his middle as best he could, breathing euphoric sighs. Being so huge felt incredible, and he found himself wishing every meal left him just as stuffed.

“Wow, I guess you bandits weren't much of an issue after all!” August bellowed. “Maybe I should think with my stomach more often.”

His gloating was met with barely audible protest, which only made August smile wider. The charr let out a big yawn and closed his eyes, drifting into a relaxing food coma to digest his prizes.

* * *

The following day August was panting as he waddled up to the main gate of the outpost he'd been based out of. His vest was still opened, too small to close around his new, wobbling belly. The sleeves were tight as well, and he couldn't wait to change into something better suited for his increased girth. Though the return trip had been noticeably more difficult, August didn't regret his gluttony. The jiggle of his gut was a wonderful feeling, and he'd found himself feeling his rounder face frequently. Keeping the weight around for a while was getting increasingly tempting.

The outpost captain was standing by the gate as August arrived, and the angry charr immediately unloaded on the mesmer once he spotted him.

“Took you long enough to get back Spiritstorm! Did you decide to take a damn nap instead of track those bandits, or did you—” The captain stopped mid-sentence as he finally noticed August's middle.

“Sorry Captain, took me longer than expected to deal with the bandit camp. They won't be bothering anyone anymore, though.” August gave his belly a happy slap, causing it to bounce.

He retrieved four dagger sheaths and tossed them at the feet of the Captain. When the baffled Captain looked down he realized the leather sheaths were pock-marked with holes, as if they'd been boiled. Slowly he put two and two together, though he was too flustered to come up with a response aside from a begrudgingly supportive grunt.

August considered that as permission to continue on, and waddled off towards his barracks, thoughts already drifting to his next meal...